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Chile: Human Rights Issue

President Pinochet and senior Chilean military officials are becoming more frustrated with the US human rights policy. They believe that they have made considerable progress during the past year in reducing violations and that Chile is being criticized unfairly.

The Chileans are particularly upset over Cuba's participation in the drafting of the US-sponsored human rights resolution pending in the UN General Assembly. They believe that human rights

violations continue to be more serious in Cuba than in Chile.

The Chileans probably will be less receptive than they were earlier this year to US overtures on human rights, at least for the short term. An increasing number of Chilean officials appear to be rapidly losing patience with the continuing over-

They believe that the US and international agencies will continue to find fault with Chile—the UN Human Rights Commission recently issued a report on Chilean violations—and that it is a waste of time to worry about US and world opinion.

Chile took two actions last week that have already elicited additional protests from human rights advocates:

- Pinochet announced in a speech to organized labor that seven union leaders would be sent into internal exile for participating in political meetings, which have been banned since 1972.

- Authorities denied reentry to three Chilean women who had returned from a trip abroad to seek assistance in locating relatives believed (See Chile... Page 3)

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to be in the hands of government security agents.

There is some danger of a resurgence of the siege mentality that characterized the Chilean Government during 1975 and 1976. Should the government become convinced that US and world opinion will be against it regardless of the measures it takes, slower progress in human rights, and perhaps even some recidivism, can be expected. Chile could, for example, continue the state of siege that Pinochet had agreed to end on 11 December.

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